

REMARKS

Claims 1-2 and 5-6 have been examined and rejected on prior art grounds. Claims 3-4 and 7-8 have been withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-2 and 5-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,177,729 to Muramatsu et al. (hereinafter "Muramatsu") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,557,644 to Kuwabara et al. (hereinafter "Kuwabara") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,345,018 to Maegawa et al. (hereinafter "Maegawa"). Applicants submit that the claims are patentable.

For example, claim 1 recites a combining part for combining the respective read signals generated for the respective demodulation schemes with one another at combination ratios different from one another to generate a plurality of combined address data signals.

Figures 3 of the subject application shows a non-limiting exemplary embodiment of the present invention in which demodulator circuits 37, 38, and 39 each perform different modulation processing on read signal Rpp to generate address signals Ra1, Ra2, and Ra3, respectively. The address signals Ra1, Ra2, and Ra3 are sent to address generator circuits 40, 42, and 44 which generate address data signals AD1-AD3. The address data signals AD1-AD3 are then supplied to respective error detection/correction circuits 41, 43, and 45. The error detection/correction circuits send corrected address data A1-A3, each corresponding to error detection result signals ER1-ER3, to a selector 46 which selects the corrected address data corresponding to the error detection result signal with the lowest error rate.

Figure 5 of the subject application shows a non-limiting exemplary embodiment of the present invention in which a combining circuit 50 is added to the circuit shown in Fig. 3, and the

remaining portions are the same. In other words, the technical concept is common to Figs. 3 and 5, and the only difference resides in the method of generating address data. Specifically, the combining circuit 50 combines address signals Ra1-Ra3 in different ratios to generate combined address data signals. If the combining ratios for the address signals Ra1-Ra3 are 100:0:0, 0:100:0, and 0:0:100, respectively, the generated address data signals would be equivalent to the address data signals of Figure 3. In the arrangement shown in Fig. 5, the combining ratios can be arbitrarily selected, so that the output signals become less affected by random noises. Thus, the provision of the combining circuit 50 leads to the improvement of the playability of the generic embodiment of Fig. 3.

The Examiner asserts that Muramatsu teaches many features of the claim, but acknowledges that Muramatsu does not teach that the read signal read from the recording medium is demodulated using different modulation schemes. The Examiner relies on Kuwabara to supply this deficiency. In particular, the Examiner cites decision sections 4 and 6 each of which carry out two-dimensional decision by different modulation systems M1 and M2.

However, Kuwabara is silent about combining the signals generated from the respective demodulation schemes M1 and M2 with one another at combination ratios different from one another. Instead, the result of Kuwabara two-dimensional decision of decision section 4 is sent to a decoding section 5, while the result of the two-dimensional decision of decision section 6 is sent to a separate decoding section 7. These separate decoding sections 5 and 7 supply decoding results RD1 and RD2 to a selector S1. Clearly, the two-dimensional results of the decision section 4 are not combined with the two-dimensional results of the decision section 6. Nor are the decoding results of the decoding sections 5 and 7 combined. Thus, Kuwabara does not teach or suggest a combining part for combining the respective read signals generated for the

respective demodulation schemes with one another at combination ratios different from one another to generate a plurality of combined address data signals, as recited by claim 1.

Muramatsu and Maegawa do not cure this deficiency.

Because Muramatsu, Kuwabara, and Maegawa, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the features of the claim 1, Applicants submit that the claim is patentable.

Applicants also submit that claim 2 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency on claim 1.

Independent claim 5 recites features similar to those discussed above in conjunction with claim 1. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 5 is patentable at least for reasons analogous to those discussed above regarding claim 1. Applicants also submit that claim 6 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency on claim 5.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
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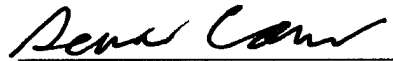
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